

When Baroda Drowns Its Genial God, Gunpati

By G. G. Coyle

ONE feels everything most keenly by the force of contrast, so when I start off to see one of these wonderful religious processions in Baroda in my own mind I replace myself in my native London atmosphere, and in the drab memory of the past which has slipped away I stage the groups of screaming color which meet the astonished eye from every new point of view.

We have just attended the festival of the god Gunpati, and an image of him has sat, in dazzling state, for ten days in the great hall opposite the palace.

Flowers and perfumes and savory foods have been strewn about him, a priest has constantly ministered to his imaginary necessities, the wild Indian music has soothed and excited him by turns, and the state dancing girls have performed in his honor; the Maharajah has spent some hours in his presence, and picky parties of admirers have squatted on carpets in the great hall to do Gunpati honor.

To our eyes Gunpati is not a handsome god, but to an Indian eye it may be a special beauty to bear an elephant's head upon one's shoulders.

I have my own opinion, and an Indian has an equal right to his. He may mutter, "What a plain woman!" as he looks upon me, while I may say, "Thank heaven, I'm not like that!" as my gaze follows the mighty line of Gunpati's trunk, that wears a rosy glow which, in our country, would not point to sobriety of conduct as to liquid nourishment.

I have an idea that Gunpati's nose is colored so cheerfully in order to convey the impression that he is one of the jolly gods who likes his worshippers to feast and make merry in his presence. He is made so larkishly human in expression that I have sometimes suspected a twitching of his trunk at a whiff of savory odor, and I have really watched for a clapping of the hands as the dancing girls executed a skillful pirouette before him.

The very fact that Gunpati is known by his familiar nickname instead of the more ceremonious "Ganesh" which started him in existence points to the fact that he is beloved in the same



The god Gunpati

way as an Uncle Thomas is known as Uncle Tommy, or old or young Tom, according to the fancy of the relative who addresses him.

For nobody except the guidebook calls Gunpati "Ganesh," and we all

know that guidebooks are written with a fixed idea of taking the piquancy out of everybody and everything.

Many legends of Gunpati's tricks and manners point to the fact that, as a boy he had enough naughty ways to make

him a lovable sort of youth who was never too painfully good to be tolerated by pleasant and commonplace people, and to this fact I am inclined to attribute his popularity.

Gunpati's Family Tree

Gunpati is the reputed son of Siva and Parvati, and he represents the qualities of moderate wisdom and tempered prudence. He is invoked by the Hindu at the outset of any new undertaking. In starting a business or taking a new house, an image of Gunpati is set up near at hand, a dedication to him is written at the beginning of a book, and he is called upon for protection at the commencement of a journey.

His history runs that Parvati told the boy, who was then an ordinary featured, commonplace sort of child, to protect her privacy from intrusion while she was taking her bath.

Meanwhile Siva returned from a long journey—so long that he and his child appeared strangers to each other. Gunpati, acting upon his mother's instructions, fiercely opposed Siva's entrance. Naturally infuriated at being detained upon his own threshold, Siva drew his sword and cut off the boy's head. The mother rushed out and informed Siva that he had killed his own child. The child who was so faithfully obeying her commands. The horrified Siva ran out into the jungle, vowing that he would secure the head of the first living being he met and place it upon the boy's shoulders. An elephant was the first passerby, so, unhesitatingly, Siva sliced off the mighty head and placed it upon the shoulders of the child. Thus was Gunpati made the elephant-headed one.

No boy can escape the teasing of his companions if he bears a headpiece like this. Boys are not the sort of characters who pass over personal peculiarities in well-bred silence. So the jests of the young fell like arrows about Gunpati's flapping ears, but the gods gave him strength to defend himself. Thus we hear of Gunpati performing wonderful feats which set him up again in everybody's estimation, as, for instance, when he indulged in a large yawn and showed the assembled company a miniature of the whole of creation in his mouth. Another time he

drew a tusk from the right hand side of his smile and felled an adversary to the earth with it, in consequence of which little bit of playfulness he is often pictured as possessing one tusk only.

We gather that Gunpati was a bachelor, although a faint attempt has been made by one authority to whitewash him with two wives, but by others it is maintained that Buddhi and Siddhi were only two ladies with whom Gunpati toyed in lighter-moments.

Why Gunpati Never Married

History further relates that when Gunpati's mother suggested his taking a wife he gallantly asserted his determination never to wed a wife less beautiful than Parvati herself, which must have been a very pleasing remark emanating from a son—yes, even a son with an elephantine appearance.

But—to Gunpati's procession as I started for it in Baroda city.

There were massed crowds in all the main streets as I drove down to the Treasury Building, from which we were invited to see the god pass by in his glory.

The closed shops, the doorways, the window sills, the balconies, the first, second and third floors, even the roofs themselves, bristled with masses of excited watchers. Babies were piled into pyramids and bayoneted in their stomachs by big brown fists; one even crowned his father by sitting nestled in his turban.

The crowd flamed like a flower garden, chrome, yellow, orange, ultramarine and rose huddled together in strips of varying widths. White, painted yellow by the glowing afternoon sun, bound the bouquets together, and a hum of excited voices rose in a continuous chant to the blue sky above.

A gun goes off. Ah! Gunpati has started from the palace!

He has called at the residence of his highness the Maharajah, and with a twinkle in his very modern eye his highness has agreed to lead the handsome train of followers which is to accompany Gunpati on his final tour—the tour which is to end in his immersion in the big tank. For he is to be drowned, and is thus to typify that even gods must come to a finality in

order to be reborn in a fresh burst of youth and ardor to a new existence.

Here they come; we rise in our seats and strain forward over our balconies. Children jump with excitement, babies are lifted aloft, a hum of realized expectation thrills the crowd, as we prepare to feast our eyes on the stream of color as it flows and surges along the road.

Soldiers, banner bearers, clamping steeds, gayly saddled; musicians emitting strange and fantastic harmonies, but stirring for all that; the silver gun, the golden gun, each drawn by pairs of white oxen clad in cloth of gold; more soldiers, a group of trumpeters liveried in ultramarine and yellow; then a massive elephant, jingling with silver anklets and loaded with rich drapery. He is cunningly painted to the eyes and has a blue-green and rose-colored trunk, and his mighty legs are shown in green stockings, which show to much advantage his massive silver anklets. Officers of the state sit in the car which rides upon his mighty back, the Englishmen, in their black morning suits, looking a little like a group of black beetles who have sneaked their way into a transformation scene.

And Then—Gunpati

Then comes another elephant in a new scheme of frenzied decoration. He is finer even than the first, for he carries relatives of the royal house in his howdah. Yet another amazing monster, bearing other high personages, and then Gunpati himself, borne in a sedan chair which is massed and bunched with flowers, rosettes and garlands. He is rosy of nose and glad of garments, seemingly content to go with his usual jolly carelessness to the watery grave, and looking very proud and pleased with his own funeral procession.

And even now we have not mentioned the passage of the King of Elephants, which bears his highness the Maharajah. Who could portray with mean black ink the awaying gold cloth the ear-drops reaching to the ground the silver-tipped tusks, the elegantly gorgeousness, and in a fine white robe of Duca muslin, draped with the world celebrated pearl necklace and crowned with his crimson turban, the Maharajah goes his smiling, swaying way, amiably acknowledging the cheers of the banked-up crowds through which he slowly passes.

What are musicians, drummers, sol-

diers, camels, after this splendor? We have feasted, and are full.

It Is Over

The procession comes to an end and the closely packed crowd shivers into groups. We descend from our roofs and balconies and rush for our carriages, making as fast as we can for the large stretch of grass land, over which we trail in any handy route for the tank in which Gunpati seeks disintegration.

Here is the sheet of blue water smilingly awaiting him. On a raised bank beside it are drawn up the mighty elephants with their riders. We crowd

upon the lifting edge of the basin and watch the priests who are administering the last rites to our friend Gunpati. Some chanting is heard, and a swirl of smoke goes up from the sacramental fire.

The sun has dipped now and the auspicious moment has arrived. By a dozen or two bare-legged men Gunpati is borne into the water.

A few moments later there is a cheer and a splash.

Gunpati is no more! His highness moves away in the state carriage which awaits him, and we all scramble for our carriages, and go cheerily home through the warm dusk to await the certainty of wise and jolly Gunpati's rebirth next year.



Watching Gunpati jump into the pool

Vain Desire

By Herbert J. Seligman

HE hung himself against old oaken gates.

Unlock, unlock, he cried, let in the day.

For springtime flames within my heart and waits

Until my love shall laugh and come away.

Reverberate his blows upon staunch oak—

Then silence fell upon the ancient court

Almost he doubted that his lips had spoke

Or that his fists had beat upon the port.

Spring in Wall Street

By C. W. Ewdaards

THIS spring! Mere words that can

no meaning hold in this deep ditch of dirty stone and steel,

A-crawl with worm-like men. How can they feel

That heav'n sent urge, these slaves who serve but gold?

So more than can the violet unfold in asphalt street, beneath their heedless heel;

For earth—and soul—are smothered by the seal

That greed of man has stamped on Nature's mould.

As the human cattle crowd their way

Beneath the street, and through the car doors fling,

A stalwart youth has held the crush away;

Safe in this space, a girl, a dainty thing,

Has smiled her thanks—with speeding train they sway,

And touch—Lo! In the roaring dark, 'tis spring!

Economy

By Lilian Hall Crowley

THE ceilings in the playhouses of New York are very beautiful.

Because I have been very near to them! There are four balconies in Carnegie Hall.

I know this, too, because I counted them

While I was looking down at the infinitesimal singer on the stage!

Have We Reached It?—A Tropical New York

By Robert Beverley Hale

ONE of the green benches of the Battery lay Mike, a native of the lower caste. He was watching the palm trees sway in almost perfect rhythm on the other side of the park, and could make out the parquets playing among the waxy, cream colored blossoms of the "Mohwa" tree. The pedestrians, with their brilliant parasols, walked below, each with that well known hurried expression which New York gives to its inhabitants. In the middle of the street stood a familiar figure, one that always gave Mike an indefinable sense of terror—a policeman. There he stood, trying to keep the camels and their drivers off the sidewalk and the monkeys off the wires which bridged the street. High above everything towered the Woolworth Building, the home of the "bandlerog." Long, juicy stemmed creepers hung out of the windows, and the monkeys could be seen running up and down on them or swinging in wide curves from tower to tower. A painted flamingo lumbered across the sky and flapped into the open door of the Aquarium. Mike turned over on his bench and went to sleep in the hot sunlight.

He awoke and saw the policeman approaching him, his great round turban of blue linen standing out against the bright background. Instinctively Mike arose, brushed off a few brown locusts and shambled toward the Hudson. Here

he stood, gazing into its warm, black waters. A crocodile, having nosed by mistake into a mass of floating island, turned around and made for the Jersey shore. There he 'bout faced and settled down in the mud. Mike could not distinguish his gray hulk from an old moss-covered log which lay alongside him.

Suddenly the tropical night came down with a rush; the bamboo clumps clanked in the low wind and the land crabs rattled softly as they crawled over the pavement. Across the waters drifted the purring monotone of the Hoboken jungle.

If the doctrine of reincarnation happens to be put into practice a scene in your daily life during the latter part of the twenty-third century will probably somewhat resemble the above. Listen, and I will tell you why.

There is no doubt that our winters are getting warmer. Even the change in a generation has been quite appreciable. For instance, the glaciers in Norway, Sweden, Alaska and the Alps began to recede some sixty years ago and this gradual retrogression has been in progress ever since. I have also heard that Canadian wheat growers aver that frosts do not injure their crops until two weeks later than they did a generation ago. And then, trite as the example is, the oldest inhabitant will always say on demand:

"Wal, seems though the winters ain't so cool as they used ter be."

Certain birds which had theretofore lived only in the United States have, in recent years, migrated northward to Lower Canada, and many of our Southern negroes have during the late war migrated to Northern munition factories.

But this change of climate is not confined to a generation. In the annals of the Immortal City we learn that time was when Plautus and Terence did figure skating on the yellow ice of the Tiber. Nowadays, however, when the Tiber freezes, the Italians gather from miles around and wonder at it. Julius Caesar, swathed in his fur togs, wrote of cold which was so intense that whole armies and even nations were enabled to cross the rivers of Gaul. Moreover, during the Middle Ages a great fair was held on the rigid ice of the Thames. To-day a shilling dropped from Westminster Bridge will generally pierce the thickest ice on the river. Such weather belongs to a climate that has long since passed away.

There are quite a few theories that strive to explain this gradual rise of temperature. Perhaps the most plausible one is that of General Drayson, which is fully explained by Major R. A. Marriott in his book "The Change of Climate and Its Cause."

It seems (according to Drayson) that besides the rapid daily rotation of the earth there is another very slow rotation round an axis which appears fixed in the heavens. This movement is very hard to explain. Suppose, however, that the North Pole stuck up into the air, as the average child imagines. The motion, then, is such that a line drawn from the centre of the earth through the pole will describe a cone.

This rotation takes place only once every 30,000 years (or, to be exact, once every 31,682), and changes the obliquity, or tip, of the earth in regard to the sun. Now, "if there was no obliquity there would be no distinction between summer and winter anywhere, but if a slight obliquity were then induced the difference between the seasons would begin to be marked."

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ferce tropical summers and very cold winters. The heat of the summers, however, did not suffice to melt the great blanket of ice, owing to its "latent heat"—that is, a mass of ice will not melt until the whole is brought up to a temperature of 32 degrees Fahrenheit, and then it requires seventy-nine times more heat to convert it to water than it does to raise it one degree. In this way the ice resists the attacks of the sun for a long time.

As soon as the winters became warmer (about 5000 B. C.) vast regions were in a condition where the summer sun overcame the resistance of the ice to melting. The resulting deluge, on account of overflowing rivers and the bursting of ice barriers, might well have spread universal dread and caused the survivors to hand down to their descendants the flood tradition. "It is probable that after this date the vast migration of the human race took place and man spread from the sub-tropical regions into Central Europe. Indeed, the organized worship at Stonehenge may perhaps be traceable to the Minoan civilization at Crete."



Since then the winters have been getting steadily warmer and will continue to do so for the next 378 years, or until A. D. 2297, the year in which the obliquity will be the least, and during which there will be but little difference between the seasons.

This coming change is intensely interesting from an economic point of view. Large tracts of land in Canada, which are at present too ice-bound for agricultural operations, will be made to yield their supply of wheat. Labrador will be opened up—in fact, I believe there is already a plan on

foot to do this. Siberia, according to some statisticians, will ultimately be capable of growing enough corn to feed the entire world.

Of course, after the period of decreased obliquity, the past ice ages are bound to recur, and the lands near the equator will present a region for the activities of the human race. The Arctic circle will be brought down to a latitude of 55 degrees (and even lower in North America), and the climate that will flourish around New York at that time would at present tend to make a native of Nova Zembla envious.

The last ice sheet left very few survivors. The next glacial period will narrow the habitable portions of the earth and stifle the energies of man. Either the northern civilization will move southward, or else it will succumb before the darker races. As this condition will not take place for some 20,000-odd years, it is not a matter to give the average healthy adult a nervous breakdown.

Within 400 years the mean between the next glacial period and the last will have been reached. It is then that there will be a recurrence of the climate during which the fig tree bloomed luxuriously in Greenland, for, in truth, fossils of this tree have been unearthed there. Can it be that our recent strikingly warm winter is the first of a series which will terminate in such a climate that we will be compelled to import palm leaf fans from Siberia in order to ward off the tropical ice-landic breezes?

Yes, the days are gone, the days when we awoke to the sound of the dry snow softly hitting the windows, the scrape of the snow shovels and the tapping of the ice choppers on the sidewalk. We have seen the last of the winters when the green car sweepers went their way amid a cloud of brown snow and the chilled wayfarers walked with cramped steps along the icy pavements.

In short, the time is upon us when the law of the Jungle will replace that of Hylan.

And she sang. Tears choked her voice—balled tears—and she sobbed the lines with a fervor that can be met nowhere off the vaudeville stage.

Before her, in the fifth row of the movie-vaudeville house, listened Mary Crofts. Who was to know that Mary, as she sat there, faced the crisis of her girlhood—that she was inwardly debating whether to yield to temptation rather than endure the grinding monotony of her lonesome, poverty-stricken existence?

Suddenly Mary became aware of the words being sung. Yes, she had some one, too, thoughts of whom were keeping her straight—her dead mother.

And as the singer sang her way through the tearful refrain, walling mechanically while she thought of the "sweet date" she had after the show as a solace for the wealthy despatch, a momentous resolution was formed in Mary's bosom.

She would not yield! God bless that song and the singer of it! She had been saved. She had entered the cheap theatre to forget, and lo, she had remembered—remembered her mother and her purity. God bless that song and the singer of it!

By Isaac Goldberg

SLOWLY, deftly, the actress transformed her wan, pale countenance into a flower of glowing beauty. Before her gaze the white lily in the cracked dressing-room mirror blossomed into a smiling peony, and strangely enough, the outward change provoked an inner one. From thoughts of a deep, dull brown her mind leaped to plans of flashing silver. She was no longer a forsaken toy, thrust aside by a sated child of thirty, but a shining star toward which moths flew in ever increasing numbers. She would wear many a man's heart yet—aye, and his purse too. Oh, she was far from being played out yet, was she, whether as actress or woman. She would yet pluck many a flower in the garden of joy. No nun's life for her! And what was more—

It was her turn to appear on the stage. As she came before the public the audience beheld a sad-faced virgin whose cheeks looked altogether too ruddy for her doleful expression. But then, she was to sing the latest popular "ballad": "It's thoughts of you, and you alone, that have helped to keep me straight." The orchestra was already "vamping" the introductory phrases of the music, and the singer, as was her habit, chose a face in the audience to whom she would sing.

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The actress hastily donned her most transparent waist, her slightest hosiery, her most tightly fitting skirt, and skipped out merrily to her "date" at the R—Hotel.

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